ACHRS representative participants: Abdah Adam and Mélissa Testouri

**Brief Introduction**

*Women Rise for All* is a virtual gathering initiative spearheaded by the United Nations Deputy Secretary-General, Amina J. Mohammed, urging leaders in all countries and across all sectors, to address the human crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event aims to bring together influential women leaders from around the globe to share how their leadership is shaping COVID-19 response. This initiative intends to support the United Nations appeal to better rebuild and ensure that people around the world have access to essential services and social protection.

*Women Rise for All* is supported by the United Nations Office for Partnerships (UNOP), a global gateway to co-create opportunities to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The event was organized on July 14 2020 from 8:00 am to 10:40 am (New York, EDT).

**List of Panelists:**

- Zain Verjee (journalist and moderator)
- Amina J. Mohammed (UN Deputy Secretary General)
- Mia Mottley (Prime Minister of Barbados),
- Simonetta Sommaruga (President of the Swiss Confederation)
- Ellen Johnson Sirleaf (former President of Liberia and Nobel Peace prize recipient)
- Bola Adesola (Vice-Chair UN Global Compact board)
- Inger Andersen (Executive director of UNEP)
- Leymah Gbowee (Nobel Peace laureate)
- Bonnie Henry (Provincial health office for British Columbia)
- Muniba Mazari (National UN Women Ambassador)
- Mariana Mazzucato (Professor at University College London)
- Natasha Wang Mwansa (Executive director and founder of the Mwansa Foundation)
- Annemarie Hou (Executive director UN Office for Partnerships)
- Graça Machel (Chair of the Graça Machel Trust)
Jennifer Cassidy (Lecturer at the University of Oxford)
- Joyce Mendez (General director and co-founder of ENERLAM)
- Alaa Murabit (Medical doctor and SDGs Advocate)
- Wawira Njiru (Founder and executive director of Food4Education)
- Sanda Ojiambo (CEO of UN Global Compact)
- Ghada Waly (Executive director of UNODC)
- Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (Executive director of UN Women)
- Jayathma Wickramanayake (UN Secretary-General’s envoy on youth)
- Andra Day (Award-winning singer)
- Dia Mirza (Award-winning actor).

KK. Shailaja, Indian politician and Minister of health and social welfare of Kerala, was unable to speak due to technological issues.

A Global and Local Perspective for All

Under the agenda item, following points were discussed during the event:

- Countries led by female heads of state were more effective in flattening the COVID-19 curve and in helping the national economic recovery. These women leaders, from various generations, have successfully managed the pandemic at either local, national and international levels.

- COVID-19 has provided an opportunity to include women in government and in other social, economic and political institutions.

- Seizing this crisis is essential to recognize women and move towards inclusive and sustainable societies. To achieve these goals, international community must work together.

- Many sections of society, including women, are on the margins of prosperity where “people may be in the same sea but not in the same boat” (Ellen Johnson words).

Panel 1: Global and Local Leadership in Action

For the first panel, many topics were tackled and questioned:

- Countries must work as a community, being firm and improve solidarity to fight the coronavirus.

- Women’s participation at every level is necessary to build stronger and better societies.

- Panelists pointed out the necessity of rethinking how humanitarian work is conducted in order to curb the pandemic.

- Women leaders tried to alleviate structural economic weaknesses in order to rethink GDP and reinforce global health systems. Policymaking is crucial in times of crisis and countries should strengthen governance and negotiation as essential processes.

- COVID-19 has exposed and reinforced the inequalities underwent by women: gender-based violence as well as social and economic vulnerabilities.

Keynote session
During this short session, Graça Machel, Chair of the Graça Machel Trust, highlighted the following points:

▪ Women’s leadership is crucial to create a **human-centered and equal world**. Women from various political, ethnic and religious leanings are needed for reconstruction at all levels.

▪ Countries need to **re-examine the predominant value system** of the last century as the issues resulting from COVID-19 are entirely manmade and leaders have the power to resolve inequalities.

▪ **Development** and **humanitarian** aid should be the primary interest of States instead of focusing national budgets on militaristic and security machines.

▪ **Women’s rights** must be the priority of all political, financial, economic and social institutions post-COVID-19

**Panel 2: Intergenerational Leadership to Reimagine Our World**

For the second panel, following items were raised:

▪ **Principles on labor rights and human rights** are necessary for removing barriers for women.

▪ **Healthcare** must be a fundamental right because the pandemic has showed that the current system is failing and exacerbating inequalities and inefficiencies.

▪ In order to eliminate structural inequality and discrimination, young people must take charge and **seize power** because those one expects to have answers do not.

**Leadership Advice**

▪ COVID-19 has had a huge **impact on democracy**, climate change and gender.

▪ Countries must reform electoral system because they cannot call themselves democratic if they exclude women, young and vulnerable people. Most countries are ruled by men for men.

▪ The pandemic is an opportunity for governments to **re-start in a greener** way and for the intergenerational women’s movement to come together. These women leaders showed that it is necessary to unite the nation

**Brief Conclusion**

Although COVID-19 has generated unprecedented global health, humanitarian and development crisis, it has also revealed the power of women’s leadership. Women’s leadership is clearly essential to effectively recreate and build a better world and to re-examine the dominant value systems.